

# Swiss have a nose for chocolate, says study

By [Anand Chandrasekhar](#)

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**Research by the University of Geneva shows that Swiss citizens are more sensitive to the smell of chocolate than non-Swiss.**

The study, which was published in Nature Scientific Reports on Tuesday, repeatedly exposed 50 students, half of whom were Swiss, to the odour of chocolate and asked them to comment on its intensity. The Swiss participants, especially those who were made conscious of their Swiss identity through a questionnaire, showed the greatest sensitivity to the smell of chocolate over time.



A commemorative chocolate-scented stamp was issued in 2001

(Keystone)

This group was more chocolate-sensitive than their non-Swiss counterparts that were also pre-exposed to the Swiss identity questionnaire or even Swiss volunteers who did not get the "Swissness" exposure.

The experiment was also conducted with popcorn – chosen because it was tasty and had no connection to Swiss identity – which did not elicit any olfactory bias. Cheese was also a candidate for the experiment but was abandoned as the researchers found out that it was often mistaken for "the smell of feet".

"We wanted to understand how social identity can change our perception of the world," study author Géraldine Coppin told swissinfo.ch. "One way of demonstrating this is by showing that our sense of smell is flexible."

Coppin also wants to test if the Swiss demonstrate a special affinity for chocolate when their identity is threatened, for example when exposed to questions about immigration. Studies on visual perception have shown that social identity influences behaviour, sometimes in unpleasant ways like racism.



**Lynx** Oct 13, 2016 2:24 PM

The Swiss must have super-sensitive noses. When I first came here I wondered why the Swiss plastered sauces all over their meat. Until I realised the store-bought meat tasted like plastic without it. For a while I wondered if my taste-buds had died, as vegetables tasted like plastic too. Then I went on holiday in Croatia and had some locally grown tomatoes - wow, incredible taste. I went back a few years later, only to find the EU imported rubbish had arrived. Back to plastic tasting tomatoes again. Now I buy local produce whenever I can. Costs a bit more, but at least I can taste my food.



**max** Oct 13, 2016 2:55 PM

People who have a "nose" for chocolate normally also have it for other types of food, like coffee. Fully agree with Lynx. Fruit sold in the supermarkets are a disaster. Look perfect outside, are full of pesticides and totally tasteless. As kids we used to say the best apples and pears are those pinched on the tree in the neighbor's garden. The reason is simple, they had reached maturity before we plucked them. Nowadays the best way is to go to the weekly market where farmers sell their products. Not necessarily much more expensive but certainly a lot better.